

10—Let us Rise and Build

1950-1963

With the coming of Pr. Paulson, the congregation had the charismatic leadership it needed to lay the foundations for a vibrant home mission outreach. Grounded in the Word and with boundless energy, Paulson led the charge, capturing the imagination and securing the enthusiastic commitment of a whole generation to rise up and build. On donated land, the congregation in 1953-54 built the parish unit, and in 1963-64 the new church, at a combined cost of \$450,000. By 1962 the congregation had grown one hundred-fold to over 1,000 baptized members. There were nearly 400 children in the Sunday School. Whatever changes were needed to accommodate the growth were done—secretarial help, pastoral interns, and finally an assistant pastor in 1962. Another parsonage was bought. Money poured into the Building Fund, from both individuals and organizations, which undertook special fundraising activities.

Paulson increased communion to once a month. With powerful Word and Sacrament ministry and strong religious education nurturing the different organizations of the church, the congregation's reason for being was clear and focused—to be a beacon to the community, including any who would come to participate in the fellowship of Jesus Christ at Norway Church.

Reaching Out

It didn't take long before C. T. Paulson's challenge was articulated in concrete terms. At the January 12, 1950 annual meeting, Melvin Johnson, chairman of the Building Fund Committee, offered the resolution that plans be made for a fund drive to raise \$75,000 for a new building to be completed on or before the 110th anniversary of the congregation, or 1953. No building was to be erected until half the money was raised.

The congregation was ready, and responded with tremendous enthusiasm and energy. As of June 1, 1951, arrangements were made for the Vernon congregation to be served by Pastor Simone of West Allis. Thus Norway and its pastor were able to focus all their efforts on the task at hand in the Wind Lake area. At the January 10, 1951 meeting, the building committee was authorized to engage an architect and to go ahead with planning for an educational unit. Paulson got a \$600 raise, and a telephone was installed in the church. Paulson reported much progress in church and Sunday School attendance: "Scarcely a Sunday passes without new faces at the church." He emphasized that the building is needed not for future needs, but for present. Membership stood at 575 baptized and 452 confirmed members. There were 165 children in Sunday School. To accommodate everyone, there were two Sunday worship services. At a special meeting in May, the congregation

agreed to accept the Massman-Johnson site for the new church. They also authorized the building committee to move forward on drawing up plans for both a church and school.

The financial statement for the year 1950 showed a tremendous response to the building fund drive. There was much sacrificial giving, including some individual gifts of up to \$3,000. This was at a time when the entire congregation's budget totaled approximately \$9,000. The organizations of the church also worked hard to raise money for the building fund, which in 1950 stood at \$50,000.



*Naomi Anderson,
Norway's organist for
60 years*

The congregation was always searching for ways to reach out to the community, and in 1950 they published a pamphlet which provided interested persons with a brief history of the church and a synopsis of the activities offered. The Lutheran Brotherhood, under the presidency of Gene Gunderson, continued to be active. The Luther League sent four delegates to the national convention in Seattle. The staff consisted of Naomi Anderson, organist, Oliver Sand, choir director, and Severt Johnson, custodian. Mission money was given to the Homme Home in Wittenberg, Juliann Jacobson in South America, and Lowell Jacobson in his Chicago mission.

The Women's Guild in 1950 was busy sending boxes to Dr. Erling Hestenes in South Africa. In all, they donated 17 boxes filled with sheets, white material for bandages, clothing for babies, and soap. In addition, the women sent 35 bundles of sewing items to World Action headquarters in Philadelphia, designated for distribution in Europe. On June 4 the women hosted a reception, consisting of luncheon and program, for 49 new church members. In November they gave a surprise harvest shower for the Paulsons and their son Philip, who had been stricken with polio. Miss Mildred Knapcik of Chicago, who would soon leave for South Africa where she would be stationed near Erling Hestenes, was the guest speaker at their annual meeting. The women's Bible study that year was on the gospel of John. Pr. Paulson led the discussion. As always, the women were heavily invested in the religious education of the children. Conditions were cramped in the Sunday School and the Altar Guild did their best to help alleviate the crowded conditions by making curtains of monk's cloth and supplying the school with more primary chairs.

The Women's Guild consisted of six active organizations, with the oldest, the Ladies' Aid, celebrating their 65th anniversary on July 15, 1951. At a program in the church the current president, Mrs. Esther Malchine,



Pr. Paulson and the Sunday School teachers

encouraged the Aid in their work and service: "May we who carry on the work today ever have the zeal for Christian service that characterized our pioneer mothers."

The January, 1952 annual meeting heard and approved the plans that architect Steubenrach had drawn up for the parish unit. The plan detailed a church in "modern gothic design, with provisions for every activity necessary to the successful operation of the congregation, as well as provision for growth." In November the building committee reported that the lowest bid was \$166,971. The congregation authorized the committee to go ahead with contracts and take out a loan for \$75,000.

The Parish Unit

Both Pr. Paulson and Mrs. Amy Jahren broke ground for the new parish unit on December 7, 1952. The new building would be erected about a thousand feet north of the old church on land given to the congregation by Mr. Severt Johnson. When completed, the 75' by 92' educational unit would consist of three floors, accomodating ten Sunday School rooms, a fellowship hall, recreation room, ladies' lounge, kitchen, and heating and plumbing facilities for the whole edifice. The fellowship hall would seat 400 people, 275 if they were seated at tables. The outer walls were to be built of lannon stone. The long range plan called for the new church to be built alongside the educational unit. General contractor, Cecil Mehring of Waterford, began work immediately.

The monthly newsletter of the congregation, *Norway News*, reported that excavation began on February 13, 1953. Contributions to the building fund came in regularly. In February of that year they totaled \$71,000. The congregation was exhorted, "The winning of souls to Christ is the primary mission

of our Church. We must meet our full responsibility NOW. Pray with the fervor that must have been in our pioneer parents when they built and organized that first church.”

The work of the church continued uninterrupted. The Sunday School reorganized and classes began again on Palm Sunday. The music program was expanded when a Junior Choir and Ladies' Chorus were organized under the direction of Mrs. Edmund Petersen. Mary Johnson was elected president of the newly formed Junior League. At the 1953 annual meeting, Ruth Hanson became the first woman in the history of Norway Church to be elected to a church office. She was voted in as secretary of the congregation. Miles Anderson was president of the congregation and presided over the approval of a new constitution. Pr. Paulson reported that if the building of the parish unit continued on schedule, the 1954 Sunday School would start the year in the new building. A new item in the budget was a Social Security tax. That year the tax was \$30. The country was at war again and the newsletter faithfully listed the servicemen serving in the U.S., Korea, Germany, Guam and Hawaii, admonishing the congregation to remember them in their prayers.

In 1953 the Women's Guild began to furnish the new kitchen. Every lady was encouraged to use her talents and fill a kitchen bank, turning it in to commemorate the 110th anniversary in September. Their president, Mrs. Henry Davis, encouraged them: "Find out what God would have you do, and do that little well. For what is great and what is small, 'tis only He can tell."

The cornerstone of the new building was laid September 13, 1953, on the 110th anniversary of the congregation. Papers were sealed in the cornerstone, including a new revised edition of the Bible, a membership list of the congregation, and an historical sketch that would be presented at the afternoon program. At noon the congregation gathered for a potluck dinner in Heg Park. After lunch the Guild presented a program of music and original poetry. Mrs. Oscar

Dukleth wrote and read the poem "Faith Marches On." Mrs. Mabel Jacobson read her poem "Tithing." The choir sang "The Lord Bless Thee and Keep Thee."

A highlight of the program was the ingathering of Kitchen Banks, totaling some \$1,300. The women shared some of the ways in which they



The congregation files into the new parish education unit



The women get familiar with their new kitchen

and auction sales. The women's organizations raised over \$3,000 that year. "Truly God's spirit is working among us, strengthening and guiding us as we carry on the work here in cooperation and harmony as the dreams of a generation are being realized," wrote Mrs. John Stalbaum, historian.

Moving in

1954 was a transition year. In addition to continuing on with the everyday work of the congregation, efforts were also directed toward getting the new parish unit ready for use. Alongside their regular mission work, the Guild took on the task of furnishing much of the new parish hall, purchasing tables for \$1,040, new dishes for \$1,125, and cupboards for \$1,952. The Lutheran Brotherhood bought chairs for the new building. The Sunday School bought furniture.

On July 11 the great transition took place. The Sunday School assembled at the church at 9:15 a.m. for the last time. They sang "Beautiful Savior," and Mrs. Van Valin, superintendent, gave a history of the Sunday School. Led by Pr. Paulson and Mrs. Van Valin, they marched down the hill singing "Onward Christian Soldiers." After assembling in the new fellowship hall, Paulson addressed them and they were dismissed to their classrooms. The Sunday School at the time was a strong mission organization. It was estimated that children came from seventy homes where parents did not belong to the church.

The Parish Unit was dedicated Sunday, September 12, 1954 at 3:00 p.m. The bulletin cover featured a picture of the new building. Many local pastors participated and the Ladies' Chorus and Senior Choir sang. The processional and recessional hymns were ones that were sung almost every Sunday during worship in those years, "Holy, Holy, Holy" and "Savior, Again to Thy Dear Name." Worship services continued to be held at both 8:15 a.m. in the old church and 10:45 a.m. in the fellowship hall of the parish unit. Sunday School for the

filled the banks. The woman with the largest bank had sold greeting cards. A woman who lived near a lake sold worms to fishers for bait, and farm women gave egg, poultry, and vegetable money. In addition to the individual banks, societies had bake sales, served wedding dinners, and sponsored rummage

more than 250 students was at 9:30.

The congregation also undertook an ambitious evangelism program in 1954. A project of the National Lutheran Council, its goal was to deepen the spiritual life of the members and reach forth to the unchurched with the gospel. Coinciding with this effort was a further innovation that served to strengthen the ministry of the congregation. Pr. Paulson was convinced that sparse and irregular communion

services had been a weakness of the Lutheran churches, many people having formed the habit of communing only once or twice a year. The congregation decided to begin celebrating communion on a monthly basis. The result of this innovation was a growing attendance at the Lord's Supper. Membership in 1954 increased to 682.

In 1954 giving per confirmed member stood at \$19.34 for the local budget, \$6.29 for synodical, and \$28.66 for the building fund. The 1955 budget jumped to over \$17,000, including \$6,879 for debt retirement. The congregation allowed another \$10,000 loan from Welfare Building and Loan, and authorized a part-time secretary for Pr. Paulson. The address of the church was Route 1, Waterford, and the phone number was Wind Lake TWilight 5-2281.

In 1955 the Lutheran Brotherhood bought a Coca-cola machine, which was installed in the lower level of the Parish Unit. The Guild sewed drapes for the fellowship hall, ladies' lounge and pastor's study. The congregation used the new building that year to good advantage, in addition to church and Sunday School, using it for a mother-daughter banquet, family night programs, a reception for Erling Hestenes, and a reception for new members.

In 1956 the congregation took a vote to determine where the new headquarters for the American Lutheran Church should be. Minneapolis beat out Chicago 36-24. Mrs. Henry Davis, president of the Women's Guild, announced that the entire proceeds of the lutefisk supper, \$1,000, was to be applied to reducing the principle on the debt. Money kept coming in for the



The children march down the hill to their new church home.

building fund, over \$15,000 in 1955. Louis Noll, treasurer of the Building Fund, reported that monies received so far totaled \$112,780.

In 1956 programs for the Guild followed the WMF series "But Grow in the Grace and Knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." A part of each organization's meeting was devoted to this Bible study, led by either the pastor or a group member. Sixteen women organized a new Mother's Circle. Its goals were to meet in Christian fellowship and to exchange helps in raising their children. They supplied the napkins for use in baptism and sponsored the Cradle Roll, enrolling 25 babies that first year.

The annual lutefisk dinner held in February carried on an annual tradition. It had had a varied history, sometimes sponsored by the Ladies' Aid, sometimes by the men's Brotherhood, sometimes held in February, sometimes held in December, sometimes it was a dinner, other times a smorgasbord. But lately, according to a contemporary article in the *Racine Journal-Times*, it had become a "finely organized, community-wide, ecumenically and ethnically integrated production." The noon meal and two evening sittings served about 900 people. 120 more were involved in preparing and serving the meals. In the past the lutefisk came in three-foot-long strips, stacked like cordwood. It had to be reconstituted by soaking it in lye water (lutefisk means "lye fish"), then freshening it in more water. This was the work done in "the pit," supervised for many years by Oscar Dukleth, and more recently by Tom Johnson. Today the fish is bought from a Minneapolis fish dealer direct from Norway, already soaked out and frozen. It takes about \$1,000 worth of fish to feed the crowds, along with 260 pounds of pork and beef for meatballs, 250 pounds of potatoes, 150 pounds of carrots, 90 pounds of butter and 8 dozen eggs for the coffee. The members bake around 50 cakes and tens of dozens of lefse, rosettes, krumkake and fattigmand.

In earlier years it was frowned upon to have too many church dinners, because it detracted from the livelihood of area restaurants. Not so with the

lutefisk dinners (no self-respecting restaurant would serve it)! These dinners are unique, and those who have made the circuit to different versions of the dinner insist that Norway does it best!

The Guild furnished the women's lounge with drapes, davenport and end tables. They also provided drapes for the choir room. They added



Church dinners raised lots of money for the building fund. They were fun, too!

two water heaters and two used stoves to the kitchen. The T. T. Mission Workers furnished a new refrigerator. The Altar Guild bought a savings bond (\$500) designated to be used for the altar in the new church.

By 1957 the Guild had a unified budget. One "church bank" was used, rather than mission boxes, self-denial offerings and thankofferings. Martha Clausen Guild (the former LDR) worked on a cookbook. The Norway Mission Society celebrated its 45th anniversary. Their guest for the celebration was Miss Marion Hanson, missionary to Japan. Mrs. Henry Davis attended the Lutheran World Federation meeting in Minneapolis, and four of the young people attended the international Luther League convention in Missoula, Montana.

Leadership of the council during this time consisted of president Roy Franke, vice president Howard Jacobson, secretary Ralph Frost, and treasurer Harley Jacobson. Trustees were Roy Weltzien, Melvin Johnson and Arthur Froehlich. Deacons were Amandus Olson, Miles Anderson, Harold Cummings, Willis Johnson and Lester Johnson.

In 1958 the congregation decided to participate in the church internship program, one of their goals being to secure additional help for Pr. Paulson, who was being pushed to the limit by all that was happening in the growing church. Severt Johnson, who was church treasurer and custodian for many years, shared his home from 1958-1962 with the four interns, third-year seminary students, who would serve a year each at Norway: Stan Rosengren, Ivan Ives, Joy Eisenhauer and William Breen.

The membership of Norway Church grew from 575 in 1951 to more than 800 in 1958. The Martha Clausen Guild put out a very fine cookbook, "From Martha's Kitchen." The pages and pages of recipes featured the best of the good cooks in the congregation—everything from egg coffee to sweet rolls, Swedish meatballs, Italian spaghetti, "Cornhusking and Silo-filling Cake" and sandbakkelse. Its first year's sales, \$1,200, was given to the building fund. The cookbook went through several editions and was later supplemented by another, "More From Martha's Kitchen."

One of the major benefactors of the sales of the cookbook over the years has been the Martha Clausen Guild-sponsored church library. Intern Bill Breen was interested in reviving the library, which had begun in Pr. Jahren's



Gene and Duke in "the pit" with the lutefisk



Olene Johnson, church librarian, with her Sunday School class

time. Glass shelves housed books in the church basement, but had been neglected over the years. Olene Johnson consented to undertake the task of revitalizing the library. The Martha Clausen Guild, of which she was a member, underwrote all the costs. The library's first home in the new church was a Sunday School room on

the second floor. Later it was moved to the basement, sharing quarters with the church office. Finally, it had grown to such an extent that it required its own room.

Planning for a New Church

At the annual meeting of January 18, 1959, the congregation formed a New Church Committee, charging it to take a survey of the congregation regarding plans for a new church and report back in six months. At a special meeting called for August 2, 1959, the committee gave its report. John Lee Malchine reported on projected growth in the area, noting that 360-420 attend services now. Miles Anderson recommended building a church with a full basement and with seating for 350-400 people. Chester Alaxson recommended a size of 108 by 50 feet, a full basement and elevator. George Delikat recommended a hard surface parking lot. They estimated the cost to be between \$16-18 per square foot. The interest rate would be about 5 1/2%. The congregation decided to hold Sunday evening meetings to discuss the building and the building committee was authorized to select an architect.

The 1960 annual meeting, led by President Gene Gunderson, elected a delegate to the last ELC convention, April 19-21, 1960. The congregation decided to explore the possibility of securing an associate pastor who was also a qualified minister of music. At a special meeting in October, the congregation purchased the Massman property, the southwest portion of the new church site, for \$16,000. The congregation celebrated the 90th anniversary of the church on the hill by holding services there each Sunday during the month of June. It took three services, at 8:15, 9:30 and 10:45 a.m. to accommodate the congregation, now at 900 members.

Though much energy was focused on local mission needs, the wider world was not neglected during these years. One of the more satisfying

moments occurred when Duke Hanson, mission secretary, sent a letter to the Oslo Memorial Church Building Fund in Norway, explaining that interested donors in Norway had contributed approximately \$400 to the building of the old log church in 1844. Now Norway Church would like to express its gratitude by helping to build the new Memorial Church in Oslo. He enclosed a check for \$400.

As a result of the 1960 merger of the ALC, ELC and UELC, yet another new church was born, the American Lutheran Church (ALC). Headquartered in Minneapolis, it began functioning in January, 1961. Dr. Fredric A. Schiotz was elected its first president. In the Milwaukee area, the merger joined 12 ALC, 8 ELC and 1 UELC congregations into a Lutheran group of some 27,000 members. The largest Milwaukee congregation was Ascension, served by Hoover Grimsby, with 5,400 members. The ALC inherited a network of 510 missionaries, touching three continents. It had a budget of \$2.7 million, four theological seminaries—in St. Paul, Dubuque, Columbus and Saskatoon, nine senior colleges, three junior colleges and four nursing schools. The new church consisted of 19 districts. Norway Church was part of the Southern Wisconsin District with offices in Janesville.

One of the casualties of the merger was the Women's Missionary Federation. After 42 years of service, it was discontinued and replaced with a new women's organization, the American Lutheran Church Women (ALCW). The new ALCW was organized into two departments, education (to know) and stewardship (to do). Its main organizational unit was the



Though the décor was still sparse, this wedding party felt like royalty in the new fellowship hall.

circle. Norway had seven, which met once a month for Bible study.

A special meeting to discuss architecture was called March 19, 1961. Dr. Joseph Sittler of the University of Chicago was invited to speak about design and style. Architect Edgar Steubenrach also made a presentation. The congregation kicked off a three year fund drive with the goal of raising \$75,000 for the building fund. An August 20 special meeting authorized moving the house on the Massman property to land donated by Leonard and Evelina Johnson, just west of the Heg Memorial. On October 1, 1961 two plans for a church were presented—Plan A showed the church attached to the Unit; Plan B showed it separate. It was voted to adopt Plan B.

The staff in 1961 consisted of Paulson, intern William Breen, president Allan Jones, choir director George Delikat, organist Naomi Anderson, custodian Lester Johnson, and secretary Doris Collins. The pastor reported that membership had now risen to 1,014. The treasurer's report listed individual contributions to four funds: current, building, mission and welfare. The average total giving was \$65.16 per confirmed member. A total of \$60,187 was disbursed. Sunday School was 400 strong with a staff of 28.

The hot item at the January 21, 1962 annual meeting was the vote on whether or not to call an associate pastor. The motion passed 50-49, with President Allan Jones casting the deciding vote. The congregation also decided to hire a full-time church secretary.

At a special meeting May 13, the congregation rejected a motion to authorize contracts for the new church bidded at \$314,377. The plan was sent back to the architect with instructions to reduce the cost. In August, the congregation voted to call Pastor V. Truman Jordahl, interim pastor at Cross Lutheran, Burlington. He moved into the second parsonage, the old Massman house.

Pr. Jordahl was welcomed to the Norway community with the performance of a play, *Muskego Boy*, which had been adapted from the book of the same name



Bob Funk, Lael Paulson and Coolie Van Valin in Muskego Boy

by Edna and Howard Hong. It is the story of a Norwegian immigrant family's coming to the Muskego settlement, their first year in the new land, and the formation of Norway congregation. New members were also welcomed into the congregation that evening. It seemed an appropriate introduction to Norway congregation.

Then tragedy struck. Pastor Paulson, the driving force behind the forward march of Norway Church, was stricken with a heart attack Friday morning, January 11, 1963. He died instantly. The congregation was stunned by the untimely death of their beloved pastor. From all quarters of the community, people gathered to pay final respects to a man who had won their hearts by so wholeheartedly living out his simple motto: "Only one life will soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last."



Paulson leads worship in the church on the hill.

Pr. Joseph Hestenes delivered the funeral sermon that Tuesday afternoon to a crowd that overflowed the fellowship hall, spilling into the basement, where almost 100 more listened over loudspeakers to the calming words of hope and promise.

Waterford Post editor Chapman wrote the obituary:

Few people in our community have had greater impact on the lives of parishioners and non-parishioners as well as did Rev. Paulson. He was Man, Mentor, Advisor, Leader, Councilor and Friend all rolled into one. He had the peculiar ability to disagree, if need be, without being disagreeable, and this ability won undying regard and friendship from hundreds of people...yet he was unassuming and humble and a man of great principle.